1: von Schwarz --18a N-5 (ca 1895) 1900 RL1 Turkestan RL1

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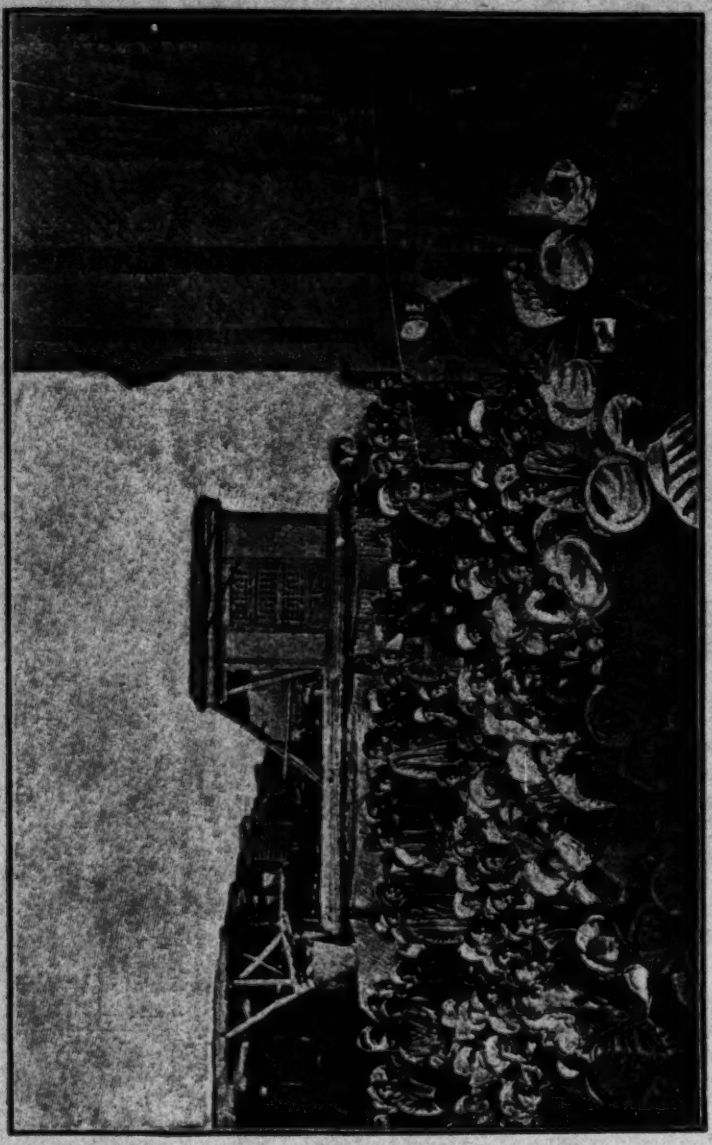

Fig. 11. Bazaar scene in Tashkent: A mullah preaches in the open marketplace.

346 garden of greater or smaller size with a pond in the middle at which Moslem visitors to the mosque make their prescribed ablutions before the prayers, if they have not already done so at home. These mosque courtyards form a favorite meeting place for all the residents whose only task in life consists in an unbroken delightful idleness, but who consider it beneath their dignity to loiter about with the younger men
793 at the bazaar and in the tea shops. At every mosque there is an 'imam' or permanent leader of prayers, with an assistant, who bears the title of 'sufi,' as well as a caller, endowed with a powerful voice, who must announce from the minaret of the mosque (Figure 74) the time of the morning and evening prayers and at the same time the curfew hour for the public houses. None of these ordinarily receives any regular salary. Instead, voluntary gifts are received, at the time of the high festivals from the vistors of the mosque in question, and at harvest time they are given a specified part of the fruit of the earth.

788 During the group prayers, inside the mosque as well as outside, the participants arrange themselves in rank and file like a detachment of soldiers, while the prayer leader (imam) is at the front in order to be visible to everyone. During the prayer people stand and kneel in rapid succession /205/ and touch the ground with the forehead from time to time; all these movements, to which are added various manipulations of the hands, are made first by the prayer leader and then imitated by the entire group, as though by command. This makes an extremely comical impression upon the non-participants, for the whole thing resembles an exercise in callisthenics more than a religious act, the more so since it all proceeds in deathly silence, for
[562] the prayers are not spoken aloud. Women may not participate in such common prayers nor visit the mosques. /Figure 74, p. 43a. Caption: The Minaret of Madamin Hodja in Khiva./

785 The Moslem fasts, which last all through the month of Ramadan, and are designated as 'urza', are completely different from the Christian fasts. They do not consist in abstinence from meat nor of moderation in eating, but instead in the prohibition of food or drink from sunrise to sundown, including even a drink of water. The Moslems are so strict in this connection that they do not even permit themselves to bathe fro some water could get into the body unintentionally through the nose or the ears. It can be easily seen that the observance of such strict fasts, especially during the burning heat of Turkestan, is no trivial thing. But scarcely has the sun set and the evening prayer is finished, before a solemn banquet begins with singing and dancing, a

291 mans have had contact with municipal civilization. The most distinctive feature of their dress is the high lambskin cap, which is not even discarded when summer is at its hottest. It is usually worn over a kind of skull-cap. The high-crowned fur caps impart to the tall, well-built Turkomans a striking and exceedingly martial note. The tribes who roam the regions of Khiva wear caps which are lower and broader in shape than those of the others. Though both Turkomans and Kirghiz are Mohammedans, neither of the two tribes wear [793] turbans with the exception of the mollahs, teachers of law and religion, who, however, mainly occupy themselves with foretelling the future and writing amulets.

The dress of the Turkoman women, like that of the men, seems expressly designed to make their tall, slender figures appear even taller. They wear long, loose gowns of brilliant red, reaching to the ground, and a high head-band resembling a cap, from which a ribbon hangs down at the back over the wearer's 301 neck. The women are very fond of ornaments, particularly those of the wealthy Tekke Turkomans who inhabit the oasis of Merv. They wear bracelets and anklets, breast ornaments of silver coins, and each of their numerous plaits ends in a small silver tassel. Nose-rings are worn by the women of the Ṣalor tribe only. Even the small helmet-like caps of the children end in a high silver point.

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798 Latin in the late 1920's, and again from Latin to Cyrillic ten years later),
212 the impounding of religious texts, including the Qur'an, and the total cessation of all publication of a religious nature. These antireligious policies would of themselves make an active religious life most difficult.

795 The interviews, however, indicate that equally important in hampering
735 the religious life of Central Asian Islam are forces not directly connected
177 with the Communist antireligious policies, such as the general impoverishment of the population, which compels the inhabitants to devote all their time and energies to attain bare survival, and leaves little freedom for time-consuming actions required by religion; the shortage of animals used in certain Muslim festivals; and the requirements of a highly dynamic society, geared primarily for production and not for the satisfaction of
[793] the needs of its citizens. If, despite such formidable difficulties, Islamic practices have not altogether vanished from Central Asia, the reason must be sought both in the great hold which this religion exercises on its followers (Bartold had once observed that history knows many cases of mass conversion *to* Islam, but not a single instance of a society being converted *from* Islam), and the secondary role of leaders and institutions in that religion; the latter factor permits Muslims, like the Jews, to survive better under extreme oppression than other religions for which the clergy, the hierarchy, the supreme spiritual authority are essential.

788 One of the most important — perhaps the single most important — ele-
177 ment in the Muslim ritual are the five daily prayers. This practice seems
[687] to have declined among Soviet Muslims to such an extent as to have all but vanished. The principal cause for its disappearance is the inability of Soviet Muslims to take time off from work in order to recite the prayers; such stoppage of work is considered "economic sabotage" and involves serious retribution. The fact that since the 1930's Friday — the day of rest and public prayer — is considered a regular working day in Central Asia prevents the adult population from engaging in communal worship as well. The only times of the day when a Muslim may perform his prayers undisturbed occur at sunrise and at sunset — the first and the last of the daily prayers; that is, when he is at home, with his family. This is the reason why, to the extent that the daily prayer is observed at all, it survives largely among that part of the population which is not gainfully employed: above all, the women and the elders.

788 The younger generation is further handicapped by its ignorance of the
869 prayers. Only a few of the refugees interviewed knew how to perform the
177 regular daily prayers; none of those belonged to the younger generation. It may also be added that not one of these refugees had cared to learn the prayers since his arrival in the West.

785 Another important duty of Muslims is to observe daytime fasting during the entire 28 days of the month of Ramazan. Prior to 1917 the fast was

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to play an important role in the life of the Central Asian Muslims of the Soviet Union.

Let us now turn to other Islamic customs and practices. Circumcision appears from the interviews to be almost universally observed by Central Asian Muslims. One of the reasons for its prevalence is its tolerance by the regime, caused by the fact that this practice requires neither abstention from work nor the transfer of personal allegiance from the state to the religion, and in fact may be justified by hygenic reasons. It is performed by mendicant "specialists," who visit villages and towns, or by anyone else skilled in the use of appropriate instruments, such as local barbers. Communist Party members and other persons in positions of responsibility who may be incriminated in the eyes of the regime by observing this practice, send their children to relatives away from home, where they can be circumcised without the knowledge of the local authorities. Circumcision seems to have lost its festive character, and is carried out so as to attract the minimum attention. Its prevalence among all layers of Muslim society, including Communist Party members, has been attested to by every one of the refugees interviewed.

The religious ceremonies attending births, weddings, and burials require the presence of religiously trained figures such as the mullahs, and it is the great shortage of such persons which more than any factor deprives them of their religious character. The vast majority of mullahs and other Muslim leaders disappeared during the terror of 1928–32. Careful questioning of refugees revealed that in some villages and towns mullahs did remain all throughout the 1930's. These "hidden mullahs" earned their livelihood as ordinary workers (e.g., kolkhoz laborers, night watchmen, etc.) and often as janitors in mosques and other religious buildings, but when the occasion arose could also conduct religious ceremonies if the latter were organized by trusted friends and within a closed family circle. Almost every one of the refugees interviewed remembered either knowing of such a clandestine mullah or of having heard of one. But they are few and live under the perpetual threat of exposure and arrest; hence, they cannot make a great impression on the religious life of their communities. Where there is need for persons with religious training, the natives are far more likely to use the services of an elderly layman from their own midst than risk engaging a person who is difficult to locate and may involve them in trouble with the authorities.

As a consequence of the disappearance of the religious leaders, births, weddings, and burials appear to have largely lost their religious complexion and become transformed into occasions for mere family gatherings. The entire institution of betrothal — which will be described at greater length below — conforms closely to secular local traditions, but is no longer accompanied by religious ceremonies. Occasionally, refugees indicate; after